

Never Feed or Attempt to Feed Marine Wildlife, as this can:

Alter their natural behavior and make them dependent on humans

Deprive young animals from learning important survival skills

Cause them to become sick or die from ingesting unnatural or contaminated food items

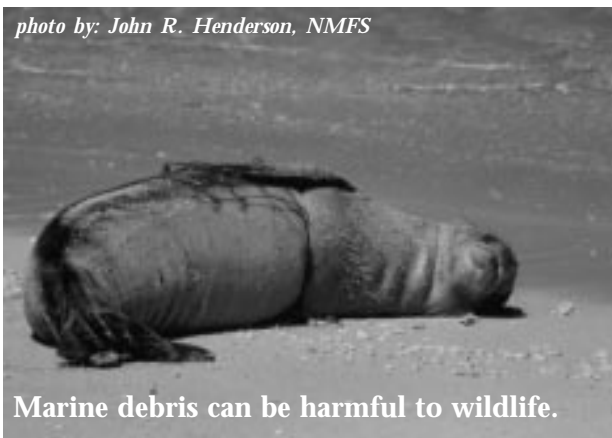
Habituate them to humans and vessels, placing them at risk of injury

Feeding or attempting to feed marine mammals is prohibited under federal law.

Dispose of Trash Properly

- ❖ Animals can mistake plastic debris for food, which can be deadly.
- ❖ Monofilament fishing lines and other plastic items can entangle and kill marine wildlife.

photo by: John R. Henderson, NMFS



Marine debris can be harmful to wildlife.

Nursing! Do not disturb.



photo by: Doris Alcorn, NMFS

Federal & State Laws and Marine Mammal Viewing

All whales, dolphins and seals are protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (MMPA). Humpback whales, sperm whales, monk seals, and sea turtles are further protected by the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) and under Hawaii State Law. The National Marine Sanctuaries Act (NMSA) provides additional protection for humpback whales and their habitat.

*Report MMPA, ESA or NMSA Violations to NOAA Enforcement:
1-800-853-1964*



photo by: Ania Driscoll-Lind

For more information about Hawaiian marine wildlife:

[NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service](#)

Pacific Islands Area Office
1601 Kapiolani Blvd., Suite 1110
Honolulu, HI 96822
Tel. (808) 973-2937
www.nmfs.hawaii.edu -or- swr.ucsd.edu/paowww.htm

[NOAA's National Marine Sanctuaries](#)

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale
National Marine Sanctuary
726 South Kihei Road, Kihei, HI 96753
Tel. 1-800-831-4888
www.sanctuaries.nos.noaa.gov

[State of Hawaii](#)

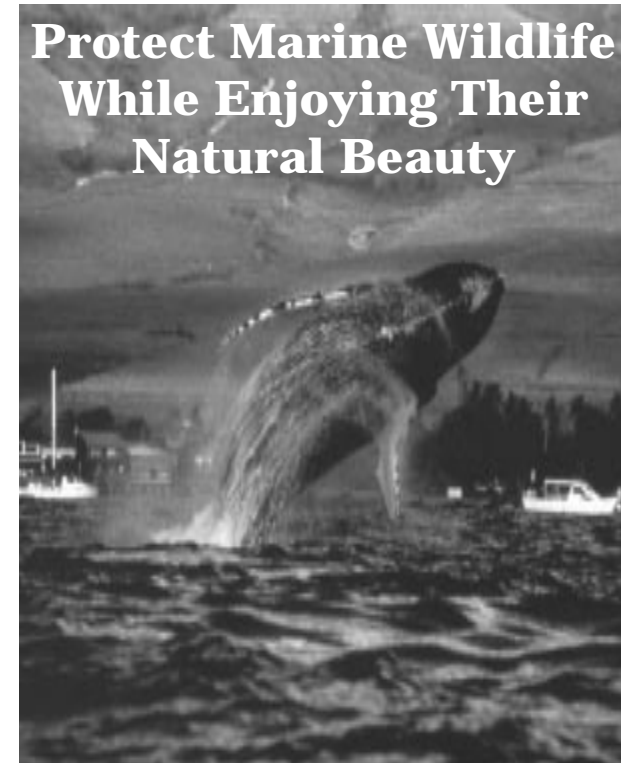
Department of Land and
Natural Resources
Division of Aquatic Resources
1151 Punchbowl Street, Honolulu, HI 96615
Tel. (808) 587-5404
www.hawaii.gov/dlnr/

Notify proper authorities if you encounter sick or stranded animals, and keep your distance. Distressed wild animals can be dangerous and should only be handled by trained professionals.



Cover photos by: Deborah Glockner-Ferrari (top) and C. E. Bowlby (bottom)

Protect Marine Wildlife While Enjoying Their Natural Beauty



Hawaii Marine Mammal & Sea Turtle Viewing Guidelines



Marine Mammal & Sea Turtle Viewing “Code of Conduct”

- 1. Remain at least 100 yards from humpback whales and 50 yards from other marine mammals (dolphins, other whale species, and Hawaiian monk seals).
- 2. Observe turtles from a distance, do not attempt to touch, ride or feed them.
- 3. Limit your time observing an animal to ½ hour.
- 4. Marine mammals and sea turtles should not be encircled or trapped between boats or the shore.
- 5. If approached by a marine mammal or turtle, put the engine in neutral and allow the animal to pass. Boat movement should be from the rear of the animal.

Pursuit and feeding of marine mammals is prohibited by federal law.

** NOAA recommends these viewing guidelines. However, these suggested guidelines do not replace federal or state law.*

You can make a difference when viewing marine wildlife. Please review these guidelines and make the “Code of Conduct” personal practice. Bring binoculars along on viewing excursions to assure a good view from the recommended viewing distances. By being aware of the steps to responsible marine mammal and sea turtle viewing you can help reduce the potential to inadvertently harm these animals or violate federal or state law.

NOAA’s National Marine Fisheries Service, the National Marine Sanctuaries, and the State of Hawaii’s Department of Land and Natural Resources provide the following guidelines for viewing whales, dolphins, monk seals and sea turtles in Hawaii.

Together we can ensure marine wildlife viewing will be as rewarding as it is today for many generations to come.

Responsible Viewing Guidelines

Keep a safe Distance - Please do not chase, closely approach, surround, swim with, or attempt to touch marine wildlife.

For humpback whales in Hawaii, federal regulations prohibit approaching closer than:

- ❖ 100 yards (90 m) when on the water
- ❖ 1000 feet (300 m) when operating an aircraft

For other species of whales, dolphins and monk seals the recommended distance for observation is:

- ❖ 50 yards (45 m) when on the beaches or on the water
- ❖ 1000 feet (300 m) when operating an aircraft

Use extra caution in the vicinity of mothers and young and in other sensitive wildlife habitat such as feeding, nursing or resting areas.

For sea turtles, please remember that feeding, touching, or attempting to ride them can cause distress. Please observe from a distance and allow them a clear escape route to deeper water.

Never entice marine wildlife to approach you.

When on or under the water, please remember that the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary is there to protect humpback whales. Disturbing the whales can disrupt vital calving, nursing and breeding behaviors.

Be Careful Not to Surprise Marine Wildlife

Loud noises and abrupt movements can startle and stress wildlife, which can react unpredictably, harming themselves or you.

Disturbing wildlife interrupts their ability to perform critical functions such as feeding, breeding, nursing, resting or socializing. Please keep your distance.

Enjoy sea turtles from a distance in clear Hawaiian waters.



photo by: Bruce Mundy, NMFS

Boat Operator Tips

While on the water, you may find yourself in the presence of marine animals, and occasionally they may even approach you. Stay alert and be careful when maneuvering vessels around marine wildlife.

- ❖ Vessels traveling in a predictable manner are less disturbing to marine wildlife.
- ❖ Avoid excessive speed or sudden changes in speed or direction in the vicinity of marine wildlife.
- ❖ Never attempt to herd, chase, or separate groups of marine mammals or females from their young.
- ❖ If marine wildlife approaches your vessel, put your engine in neutral and allow the animal to pass.



Too close! Turtles need their space.

photo by: Bruce Mundy, NMFS

Leaving a viewing area has as much potential to disturb animals as your approach, and should be done carefully.

- ❖ When leaving the viewing area, slowly maneuver your vessel away from the animals.
- ❖ Pursuit of marine mammals is prohibited by law.
- ❖ If you need to move around marine wildlife, do so from behind.
- ❖ Avoid approaching marine wildlife head-on or cutting across the animals’ direction of travel.

Resting dolphins should be observed from a distance.



photo by: Ania Driscoll-Lind

Marine wildlife may surface in unpredictable locations.

- ❖ Actively look for surfacing animals —slow down and steer away from their direction of travel.
- ❖ Marine mammals engaged in breaching and flipper/tail slapping may endanger people and/or vessels.
- ❖ Whales and dolphins are more likely to be disturbed when more than one vessel is near them.

Observe whales from a safe distance.

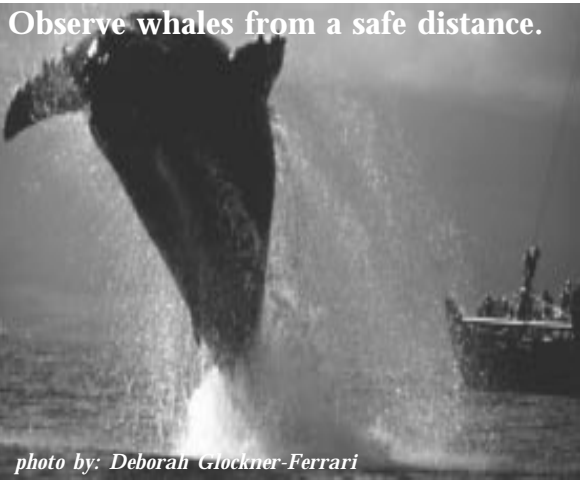


photo by: Deborah Glockner-Ferrari

- ❖ Avoid approaching whales and dolphins when another vessel is near.
- ❖ Do not encircle or trap them between boats or between boats and the shore.
- ❖ Always leave the animals an “escape route.”

When several vessels are in an area, communicate with the other vessel operators to ensure that you do not cause disturbance.

- ❖ Limit your time with any individual or group of marine wildlife.
- ❖ You or your vessel may not be the only one that day to have approached the same animal(s). Please be aware that cumulative impacts may also occur.
- ❖ Encounters with marine wildlife may cause stress to the animals even if it isn’t obvious. In order to be a respectful viewer, please limit your timespent observing to avoid causing disturbance of their natural behavior.



photo by: Bruce Mundy, NMFS

How to Recognize Disturbance

While viewing marine mammals, you should ensure that your actions do not cause a change in the behavior of the animals you are observing. Since an individual animal's reactions will vary, carefully observe all animals and leave the vicinity if you see the following signs of disturbance.

Spinner dolphins are known for their acrobatic behavior.

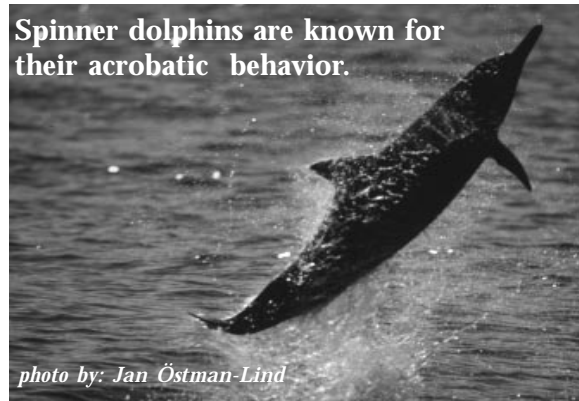


photo by: Jan Östman-Lind

For Whales and Dolphins:

Much of the disturbance for these animals is related to direct pursuit or from underwater sound produced by a vessel's engines and propellers. Ensure that your presence does not disturb them.

Cautiously move away if you observe any of the following behaviors:

- ❖ Rapid changes in swimming direction or speed.
- ❖ Erratic swimming patterns.
- ❖ Escape tactics such as prolonged diving, underwater exhalation, underwater course changes, or rapid swimming away from your location at the surface.
- ❖ Female attempting to shield a calf with her body or by her movements.
- ❖ Sudden stop in important breeding, nursing, feeding or resting activities after your arrival.

For Sea Turtles:

Sea turtles are found most often in shallow coral reef areas, which are also used by divers and snorkelers. Enjoy their underwater grace and beauty, but do so from a distance. Please remember that sea turtles are relatively slow swimmers and require air to live. If you see them rising to surface, give them room to replenish their air supply. Ensure that your presence does not disturb them.

Cautiously move away if you observe any of the following behaviors:

- ❖ Sudden awakening from a sleep-like state on the seafloor.
- ❖ Movement away from the disturbance.
- ❖ Increase in swimming speed.
- ❖ Dive toward deeper water.



photo by: Bruce Mundy, NMFS

Hawaiian monk seals are one of the most endangered species of seals in the world. Help protect them by giving them plenty of space.



photo by: C. E. Bowlby, NMFS

For Hawaiian Monk Seals:

Hawaiian monk seals are the only pinniped species endemic to the Hawaiian Islands. They are one of the most endangered marine mammals species in the world. Hawaiian monk seals hauled out on sandy beaches are sensitive to human presence. Ensure that your presence does not disturb them by observing them from at least 100 feet. In the ocean, monk seals may exhibit inquisitive behavior. Do not attempt to approach these seals or "play" with them. The seals may misinterpret your actions and could cause serious injury. Cautiously swim back to shore or your boat and watch them from a safe vantage.

Please move away if you see the following behaviors:

- ❖ Rapid movement away from the disturbance and toward the water.
- ❖ Sudden awakening from sleep on the beach.
- ❖ Female attempting to shield a pup with her body or by her movements.
- ❖ Vocalization or "growling" at the disturbance.

Please remember to keep your pet on a leash at all times when in the presence of monk seals and do not attempt to push seals back into the water.